Overcoming the sub-Deuteronomism and Sub-chronicism of historiography in biblical studies : the case of the Samaritans

Schmid, Konrad

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110581416-002

Konrad Schmid

Overcoming the Sub-Deuteronomism and Sub-Chronicism of Historiography in Biblical Studies: The Case of the Samaritans[1]

Biblical scholars discussing the Samaritans currently find themselves in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, compared with other sources, evidence of the Samaritans is meager in the Hebrew Bible. On the other hand, recent scholarship has tended to assume that—historically speaking—the Samaritans must have been much more important than the biblical presentation alone suggests. Significant work along these lines includes the recent monographs on the Samaritans by Magnar Kartveit and on the Jews and the Samaritans by Gary Knoppers.[2] Stefan Schorch has offered a new overview of Samaritan scholarship in German.[3]

One of the most important insights of critical biblical studies that enabled these developments is the necessity of distinguishing between the biblical and the historical Israel, as Reinhard Kratz has put it in a recent book title.[4] The Israel of the Bible is different from the one inferred through historical reconstruction, though it needs to be stressed that the different aspects of what the term "Israel" can denote historically—basically the Northern Kingdom either without

1 An earlier version of this paper in German was published as "Die Samaritaner und die Judäer: Die biblische Diskussion um ihr Verhältnis in Josua 24," in *Die Samaritaner und die Bibel: Historische und literarische Wechselwirkungen zwischen biblischen und samaritanischen Traditionen / The Samaritans and the Bible: Historical and Literary Interactions between Biblical and Samaritan Traditions*, ed. Jörg Frey, Ursula Schattner-Rieser, and Konrad Schmid, SJ 70; StSam 7 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 21–49.

2 Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans* (VTSup 128; Leiden: Brill, 2009); Gary N. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of Their Early Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

3 Stefan Schorch, "Der Samaritanische Pentateuch in der Geschichte des hebräischen Bibeltextes," *VF* 60 (2015): 18–29.

4 See, for example, Reinhard G. Kratz, *Historical and Biblical Israel*, trans. Paul Michael Kurtz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); idem, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*, trans. John Bowden (London: T&T Clark, 2005); Christoph Levin, *The Old Testament: A Brief Introduction*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012).

https://doi.org/10.1515/-002

or with the Judean southern kingdom[5]—are a witness to this development from the historical to the biblical Israel.

In practice, however, this distinction between the historical and the biblical is in many places ignored and *de facto* disregarded. The lack of this distinction proves to be the case quite often in the presentation of the history of Israel in the last century. In a 1993 review article, Manfred Weippert lamented what he fittingly called the widespread "Sub-Deuteronomism" with which particularly the pre-state history of Israel is reconstructed in textbooks.[6] What is meant by "Sub-Deuteronomism" is the subtle influence of the Bible's Deuteronomistic view of history as portrayed in the books from Genesis through Kings on how historians conceive the way that history might have played out. The danger of blurring the difference between biblical and historical Israel is quite natural because there are not many available extra-biblical sources, while the Bible offers at best tertiary sources that are correspondingly difficult to evaluate.[7] For example, in several textbooks, one reads of a Patriarchal Era or the Era of the Judges, but these assumptions cannot be verified.[8] They rely on biblical images of Israel's

5 On the historical reasons and processes for the adoption of the term "Israel" for the South, see Nadav Na'aman, "The Israelite-Judahite Struggle for the Patrimony of Ancient Israel," *Bib* 91 (2010): 1–23; idem, "Saul, Benjamin and the Emergence of Biblical Israel," *ZAW* 121 (2009): 216–224, 335–349; Daniel Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). See also, with a strong emphasis on the mediating function of the sanctuary of Bethel, Ernst Axel Knauf, "Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judean Language and Literature," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period,* ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 291–349. A different approach is taken by Kristin Weingart, *Stämmevolk—Staatsvolk—Gottesvolk? Studien zur Verwendung des Israel-Namens im Alten Testament,* FAT II/68 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

6 Manfred Weippert, "Geschichte Israels am Scheideweg," *ThR* 58 (1993): 71–103, 73.

7 On the methodological discussion, see, e.g., Christof Hardmeier, "Zur Quellenevidenz biblischer Texte und archäologischer Befunde: Falsche Fronten und ein neues Gespräch zwischen alttestamentlicher Literaturwissenschaft und Archäologie," in *Steine—Bilder—Texte: Historische Evidenz außerbiblischer und biblischer Quellen*, ed. idem, Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte 5 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2001), 11–24; Christoph Uehlinger, "Bildquellen und 'Geschichte Israels': Grundsätzliche Überlegungen und Fallbeispiele," in *Steine*, ed. Hardmeier, 25–77; Joachim Schaper, "Auf der Suche nach dem alten Israel? Text, Artefakt und 'Geschichte Israels' in der alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft vor dem Hintergrund der Methodendiskussion in den Historischen Kulturwissenschaften," *ZAW* 118 (2006): 1–21, 181–196. See also the contributions in Hugh G.M. Williamson, ed., *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

8 See the reflections in Konrad Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible*, trans. James D. Nogalski, Siphrut 3 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010); Philippe Guillaume, *Waiting for Josiah: The Judges*, JSOTSup 385 (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

pre-history that are unlikely to be simply fiction, but at the same time transcend the sphere of history into a mythic past.

Such problems with biblically inspired reconstructions of the history of Israel likewise apply to questions about the Samaritans. The "Sub-Deuteronomism" that depicts Judah as the real Israel such that the territory of the former Northern Kingdom plays no role after 722 and 587 BCE is concretized in numerous modern publications on the history of Israel.[9] As a result, one can even identify a "Sub-Chronicism" often extending the usual "Sub-Deuteronomism." The basic assumptions of the Deuteronomic view of history for the exilic and postexilic periods is thereby modified through the basic assumptions of the Chronistic view of history. The history of Israel essentially takes place in Judah. The territory of the former Northern Kingdom ideally remains a part of Israel, but it remains caught in its antagonism toward Judah and thereby rejects the offer to participate in the Judean restoration efforts.

When one considers customary presentations of the history of Israel, the topic of the Samaritans—apart from a few exceptions (Sacchi, Miller-Hayes, Widengren)[10]—is usually treated in about 2–3 pages, as is the case in of the discussions of Manfred Metzger,[11] Siegfried Hermann,[12] Herbert Donner,[13] J. Alberto Soggin,[14] Gösta Ahlström,[15] and Michael D. Coogan.[16] However, it is conspicuous

9 See Gary N. Knoppers, "In Search of Post-Exilic Israel: Samaria after the Fall of the Northern Kingdom," in *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day, JSOTSup 406 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 150–180, 151: "The Deuteronomistic Interpretation of Israel's fall has also influenced modern scholarship."

10 See Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period*, JSOTSup 285 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 152–59. J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 337–339 present their own solution that merely addresses the fall of Samaria as it is presented in 2 Kgs 17:21–40. Comparatively extensive is the treatment of the Samaritans in Geo Widengren, "The Persian Period," in *Israelite and Judean History,* ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (London: SCM, 1977), 489–538.

11 Manfred Metzger, *Grundriss der Geschichte Israels* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1963), 172–74.

12 Siegfried Hermann, *Geschichte Israels* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973), 399–400.

13 Herbert Donner, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel und seiner Nachbarn in Grundzügen*, 2nd ed., GAT 4/2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 469–470.

14 J. Alberto Soggin, *Einführung in die Geschichte Israels und Judas: Von den Ursprüngen bis zum Aufstand Bar Kochbas* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), 219–222. Treatment of the Samaritans is completely missing in, e.g., Shmuel Safrai, *Das jüdische Volk im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978).

15 Gösta Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 901–904.

that Christian Frevel's new book on the "Geschichte Israels" is quite detailed about the Samaritans in the Persian period, elaborating his case in 7 pages.[17] Apparently, the policy is starting to change.

The widespread neglect of the Samaritans, at least in older literature, is, to put it bluntly, a biblicism. The Bible is an important source for Israel's history, but it is focused on Judah and Jerusalem.[18] The presentation is weighted entirely toward the South, and where the North comes up, it is generally mentioned in a defensive and even discriminatory manner. Primarily, the explicit passages in 2 Kgs 17:24–40; Ezra 4:1–5; Neh 13:28–30; and 2 Chr 30:1–18 are of interest with regard to the Samaritans. They are open for a historical investigation, but they are colored in different ways by bias—in particular their pro-Judean stance. The Samaritans appear as a syncretistic community with dubious political ambitions.

Older scholarship on the Samaritans remained markedly under the banner of the biblical accentuations. The study by J. W. Rothstein *Juden und Samaritaner* from the year 1908 bears the subtitle, *Die grundlegende Scheidung von Judentum und Heidentum: Eine kritische Studie zum Buch Haggai und zur jüdischen Geschichte im ersten nachexilischen Jahrhundert* ("The Fundamental Separation between Judaism and Paganism: A Critical Study on the Book of Haggai and the Jewish History in the First Postexilic Century").[19] The parallelism of the title and subtitle show clearly that the Samaritans are pagans according to Rothstein as it is true for much Jewish polemic of antiquity.[20]

A similarly difficult viewpoint appears in James A. Montgomery's book *Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect: Their History, Theology, and Literature*,[21] even when taking into account that the English term "sect" is more neutral

16 Leonard J. Greenspoon, "Between Alexandria and Antioch: Jews and Judaism in the Hellenistic Period," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. Michael D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 346–49.

17 Christian Frevel, *Geschichte Israels* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2016).

18 On the historical processes, see n. 4 above.

19 J. W. Rothstein, *Juden und Samaritaner: Die grundlegende Scheidung von Judentum und Heidentum: Eine kritische Studie zum Buch Haggai und zur jüdischen Geschichte im ersten nachexilischen Jahrhundert*, BZAW 3 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908).

20 See Lester Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian, 2: The Roman Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 503.

21 James A. Montgomery, *Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect: Their History, Theology, and Literature* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1907; repr. 1968). Cf. Ingrid Hjelm, *The Samaritans and Early Judaism: A Literary Analysis*, JSOTSup 303 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 13–22.

and more widely used than the German word "Sekte."[22] Lester Grabbe also treats the Samaritans in his presentation *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* under the section "Individual Sects and Movements."[23] This very categorization of Samaritans as a Jewish group or sect is problematic, as they regard themselves not as a part of Judaism, but as "Israelites".

However, the situation just sketched above as characterizing 20th century textbooks should also be relativized, as already noted with Frevel's new "Geschichte Israels." The "Sub-Deuteronomism" and "Sub-Chronicism" in the field of the history of Israel has undergone considerable criticism over the past 20 years, and its faulty perspectives and methods have clearly been recognized in biblical studies.[24] Of course, there were earlier contrarian voices, such as the well-known essay by Albrecht Alt on the Samaritans' role in the formation of Judaism, which had to be updated, however, by newer findings on Yehud's provincial status already in the early Persian period.[25]

Most responsible for this development is the considerable rise of archaeology in Israel, which has substantially altered the biblical picture of the history of Israel in various places. In terms of reception within biblical studies, notable works were those of David Jamieson-Drake, Hermann Michael Niemann, and Nadav Na'aman, all from the early 1990s,[26] which on the basis of various indirect indicators established that the Northern Kingdom was more developed in terms

22 On the example of the Qumran community, see the remarks in John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 7–9, as well as the elaborations of David J. Chalcraft, ed., *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances* (London: Equinox, 2007).

23 Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian, 2*, 502–7.

24 See especially the contributions by Hans G. Kippenberg, *Garizim und Synagoge: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur samaritanischen Religion der aramäischen Periode*, RVV 30 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971).

25 Albrecht Alt, "Die Rolle Samarias bei der Entstehung des Judentums (1934)," in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israels II*, ed. idem, 2nd ed. (Munich: Kaiser, 1959), 316–37; idem, "Judas Nachbarn zur Zeit Nehemias," in ibid., 338–45; cf. Sebastian Grätz, "Zu einem Essay von Albrecht Alt: Die Rolle Samarias bei der Entstehung des Judentums," in *Kontexte: Biografische und forschungsgeschichtliche Schnittpunkte der alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft*, FS Hans Jochen Boecker, ed. Thomas Wagner et al.; (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 171–84.

26 David Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah: A Socio-archaeological Approach*, JSOTSup 109 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991; repr. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010); Hermann Michael Niemann, *Herrschaft, Königtum und Staat: Skizzen zur soziokulturellen Entwicklung im monarchischen Israel*, FAT 6 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993); Nadav Na'aman, "The 'Conquest of Canaan' in the Book of Joshua and in History," in *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, ed. Nadav Na'aman and Israel Finkelstein (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 218–81.

of culture and was more politically important than the Southern Kingdom. Israel Finkelstein's 2014 book on the *Forgotten Kingdom* is a neat synthesis of the recent findings that corroborate this view, but his title still reflects the traditional negligence of the North: Its basic quality is having been forgotten. The prevalence of the North is a natural conclusion, based on consideration of its geographic realities. Some have recently argued for the simultaneity of the cultural development of Judah and Israel, but at present there is little to uphold this contrary position.

In terms of the history of scholarship on the relationship between the North and South, one can reach a conclusion similar to what is the case for Israel and its neighboring cultures: The biblical account and focus have turned out to be one-sided and call for historical adjustments, which have since taken place. Israel – in the greater sense – was not the center of the Ancient Near East, let alone its historically and culturally most powerful element. Only through the massive history of reception, particularly of the Bible, did Israel become more important than Egypt or Mesopotamia in Western academia. Judah was neither the only nor the central factor of the history of Israel after 722 BCE. Again, Judah's *de facto* prevalence is a product of the Bible, not of ancient Judean history.

Probably the most important turning point in appraising the significance of the Samaritans for the history of Israel took place around 20 years ago. New archaeological findings played a decisive role, bringing about a broadening of the sources and a calibration of the biblical picture. In particular, the findings hinting to a comparatively early existence of a Samaritan temple on Gerizim[27] show that, as early as the Persian and also in the Hellenistic period, there were two possibilities in the land of Israel for worshipping the biblical God—on Gerizim and in Jerusalem. Consequently, especially since the 1990s, many new publications on the Samaritans saw the light of day and significantly increased scholars' understanding in this area, leading to different and new perspectives.[28]

---

27 Cf. Ephraim Stern and Yitzhak Magen, "Archaeological Evidence for the First Stage of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim," *IEJ* 52 (2002): 49–57; Yitzhak Magen, "The Dating of the First Phase of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in Light of the Archaeological Evidence," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 157–211; Yitzhak Magen et al., eds., *The Aramaic, Hebrew and Samaritan Inscriptions*, vol. 1 of *Mount Gerizim Excavations*, Judea and Samaria Publications 2 (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004); Yitzhak Magen, *A Temple City*, vol. 2 of *Mount Gerizim Excavations*, Judea and Samaria Publications 8 (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2008), 167–205.

28 Cf. the works by Jürgen Zangenberg, *ΣΑΜΑΡΕΙΑ: Antike Quellen zur Geschichte und Kultur der Samaritaner in deutscher Übersetzung*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 15 (Tübingen: Francke, 1994); Gary N. Knoppers, "Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Zion: A Study in the Early

As a result of the new sensibilities regarding the Samaritans in biblical studies, one may ask whether certain biblical texts need to be interpreted differently when read with eyes that are not staring at Judah alone. I shall illustrate this by looking at the concluding chapter of the book of Joshua (Joshua 24). I will not address the post-biblical Samaritan traditions about Joshua 24, as Ingrid Hjelm has already dealt with this topic.[29] After the portrayal of the conquest of the land of Canaan by the tribes of Israel, this chapter contains Joshua's farewell address in which he commits the tribes to YHWH, their God. Of course, Joshua 24 plays out during a time when separation between Samaritans and Jews was not an issue, since there were no Jews or Samaritans at the time of the narrative setting. But given the general consensus that Joshua 24 was written in a period later than the time of its literary scenery, this relationship could have been and, I will argue, was in fact a reality.

Joshua 24 is an extraordinarily high profile text in biblical studies that has been treated by multiple monographs[30] and addressed even more frequently in articles and essays. Although nearly every possible dating has been proposed for it, in recent scholarship, the assumption that this chapter is a postexilic text has increased significantly—and rightly so, to my mind.[31] Of primary importance

History of the Samaritans and Jews," *SR* 34 (2005): 309–338; idem, "Revisiting the Samarian Question in the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 265–289; Hjelm, *Samaritans*; eadem, *Jerusalem's Rise to Sovereignty: Zion and Gerizim in Competition*, JSOTSup 404 (London: T&T Clark, 2004); eadem, "What do Samaritans and Jews Have in Common? Recent Trends in Samaritan Studies," *Currents in Biblical Research* 3 (2004): 9–59; Bob Becking, *The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archaeological Study*, SHANE 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1992); idem, "Do the Earliest Samaritan Inscriptions Already Indicate a Parting of the Ways?," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, 213–222; Yitzhak Magen, *The Samaritans and the Good Samaritan* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2008), 3–40; Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans*, VTSup 128 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

29 Hjelm, *Jerusalem's Rise*, 195–210.

30 See, e.g., Götz Schmitt, *Der Landtag von Sichem*, AzTh I/15 (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1964); Herbert Mölle, *Der sogenannte Landtag zu Sichem*, Forschung zur Bibel 42 (Würzburg: Echter, 1980); William T. Koopmans, *Joshua 24 as Poetic Narrative*, JSOTSup 93 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990); Moshe Anbar, *Josué et l'Alliance de Sichem (Josué 24:1–28)*, BET 25 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992). See also Thomas Römer, "Das doppelte Ende des Josuabuches: einige Anmerkungen zur aktuellen Diskussion um 'deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk' und 'Hexateuch,'" *ZAW* (2006): 523–48, 535 n. 39.

31 Jean L'Hour, "L'alliance de Sichem," *RB* 69 (1962): 5–36, 161–184, 350–368; Andrew D. H. Mayes, *The Story of Israel between Settlement and Exile: A Redactional Study of the Deuteronomistic History* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 51; Anbar, *Josué*; Thomas Römer, *Israels Väter: Untersuchungen zur Väterthematik im Deuteronomium und in der deuteronomistischen Tradition*, OBO 99 (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 325–26.

is the literary horizon that Joshua 24 reflects. Verses 2–4 name the three patriarchs, and therefore look back to Genesis. Particularly striking is the note in Josh 24:32 on the burial of Joseph's bones, which concludes a narrative thread beginning in Gen 50:25 and is found again in Exod 13:19.[32] The parallelism between Joseph and Joshua in the 110 years of their lives should also be mentioned here. As for the setting of Joshua 24 in Shechem, one can also suppose that a reference back to Gen 12:6, 8 is present—namely, Abraham's construction of an altar in Shechem.[33] Israel's history in Genesis through Joshua ends where it began.

If one follows the mainstream at least of European pentateuchal or, as the case may be, hexateuchal scholarship, which assumes that the hexateuchal theme from the patriarchs to the conquest originated at a late point in the narrative books' literary history,[34] then this literary horizon of Joshua 24 already speaks decidedly against an early date. This position can be substantiated further by some specific tradition-historical and redaction-historical observations. The main concern of the chapter, namely the call to serve Yhwh and renounce other gods, can hardly be older in terms of theological history than the first commandment of the Decalogue, which itself presupposes the Shema Israel, traditionally placed in the Josianic period, as well as the literary and functional core of Deuteronomy.[35]

Among the inner-biblical affiliations in Joshua 24, the reception of the Priestly document is of preeminent importance for the date of this chapter. The indications that Joshua 24 is familiar with Priestly language are particularly clear: הר שעיר as Esau's place of residence (Josh 24:4) appears only in Gen 36:8–9, a text normally accorded to "P."[36] The designation ארץ כנען (Josh 24:3) is also a

32 On this, see Markus Witte, "Die Gebeine Josefs," in *Auf dem Weg zur Endgestalt von Genesis bis II Regum*, FS Hans-Christoph Schmitt zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Martin Beck and Ulrike Schorn, BZAW 370 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 139–56.

33 Finally, the casting aside of the "foreign gods" from "beyond the river" in Josh 24:13–28 refers back to the renunciation scene in Gen 35:1–5, esp. 35:2b, 4. However, Gen 24:2b, 4 is likely a post-Josh 24 corrective to this pro-Samaritan perspective, see below n. 40.

34 See the overview in Kratz, *Composition*; Jan C. Gertz, Konrad Schmid and Markus Witte, eds., *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion*, BZAW 215 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002); Tom Dozeman and Konrad Schmid, eds., *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation*, SBLSS 34 (Atlanta: SBL, 2006); Jan C. Gertz et al., eds., *T&T Clark Handbook of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Literature, Religion and History of the Old Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 237–72.

35 Cf. Reinhard G. Kratz, "Der vor- und der nachpriesterschriftliche Hextateuch," in *Abschied,* ed. Jan C. Gertz et al., 295–323.

36 See Mölle, *Landtag,* 208.

term that is used especially in the Priestly document in Genesis.[37] Particularly the expression כל ארץ כנען is specifically Priestly, designating the further settlement areas of all Abrahamic descendants in the Levant, namely the Edomites and the Arabians, according to Gen 17:8.

The prominent mention of Aaron in Josh 24:5 (cf. v. 33) would be difficult to explain without the Priestly version of the exodus.[38] The beginning of v. 5 could possibly be a literary addition, since it is omitted from the LXX. Finally, the depiction of the miracle of the Sea in Josh 24:6–7 in particular indicates that an edition of Exodus 14 that is interlaced with "P" is received here[39] (cf. רדף Exod 14:4, 8–9, 23 "P"; פרש/רכב Exod 14:9, 17–18, 23, 26 "P"; כסה Exod 14:28 "P"[40]). Therefore, the Priestly Document should be taken as the *terminus ante quem non* for Joshua 24—if not in its entirety, then at least for a considerable portion of it.[41]

A relative literary *terminus ante quem* for the formation of Joshua 24 can be found in Neh 13:28–30, since this text presents a clear and critical response to the position of Joshua 24. While Joshua 24 still promotes the inclusion of the Samaritans and calls for the dismissal of "foreign" gods with an all-Israel perspective and a setting in Shechem, Neh 13 views the Samaritans themselves as "foreign." Nehemiah prides himself on having expelled one of the sons of Jerusalem's High Priest because he intermarried with the Samaritans: "And one of the sons of Jehoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, was the son-in-law of San-

37 See Anbar, *Josué*, 87.

38 See Heinrich Valentin, *Aaron: Eine Studie zur vor-priesterschriftlichen Aaron-Überlieferung*, OBO 18 (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 36–45; Peter Mommer, *Samuel: Geschichte und Überlieferung*, WMANT 65 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 126.

39 See also Blum, "Knoten," 197 and n. 68.

40 Volkmar Fritz, *Das Buch Josua*, HAT I/7 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 249 (he naturally sees the relevant text portions in Josh 24:6–7 as "additions" because his basic text originates from "DtrH"); Anbar, *Josué*, 98–99. Klaus Bieberstein, *Josua—Jordan—Jericho: Archäologie, Geschichte und Theologie der Landnahmeerzählungen Jos 1–6*, OBO 143 (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 399, sees in Josh 24:7,11, however without any detailed explanation, "nur eine allgemeine Abhängigkeit von der so genannten 'jahwistischen Fassung' von Ex 14" ("only a general dependence on the so-called 'Yahwistic version' of Exod 14").

41 Albert de Pury views "P^{g} as the absolute beginning," in *Les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, de l'Hexateuque et de l'Ennéateuque*, ed. Konrad Schmid and Thomas Römer, BEThL 203 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 99–128.

ballat the Horonite; I chased him away from me....Thus I cleansed (טהר)[42] them from everything foreign (נכר)." (Neh 13:28–30)

A similar case appears in Gen 35:2b, 4, which according to the hypothesis of Yair Zakovitch, Nadav Na'aman, and Hans Rapp presents a critical reception of Josh 24:[43] The sanctuary near Shechem that is at play in the background scenery of Josh 24 is in reality nothing other than and nothing less than a *favissa* in which Jacob disposed of his family's idols. These portions of the verses are, however, quite difficult to date. Joshua 24 is, therefore, later than the Priestly Document, which belongs in the early Persian period, but earlier than Neh 13 and Gen 35. Therefore, it likely emerged between the end of the 6th and the 4th centuries BCE, at a time when Jews and Samaritans co-existed side by side.

Whether one can narrow the date further based on the archaeology of ancient Shechem—which plays a prominent role in Josh 24:1 as the gathering place for all the tribes—depends on how one interprets the content of Joshua 24. Ancient Shechem, *Tel Balāta*, appears to have been unsettled between 480–330 BCE. Depending on how pro-Samaritan one finds Joshua 24, then 480 BCE could present a further *terminus ante quem*. If Joshua 24 were an offer to the North to join cultically and politically with the South, then the setting in Shechem would fit better with a settlement that was still in existence. If Joshua 24 instead drafts a theological ideal of all Israel that was conceived in the South but did not really push for a realization by equals, then a date after 480 BCE would be more plausible. From this perspective, Joshua 24 could take place in Shechem in the sense of a theological gesture, but one would not need to fear any competition with Jerusalem.

At any rate, the opening of Josh 24:1 is of particular importance for our topic: "Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the

42 On the terminology of "purity" of the communication see Saul Olyan, "Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community," *JSJ* 35 (2004): 4–10; Rainer Albertz, "Purity Strategies and Political Interest in the Policy of Nehemiah," in *Confronting the Past*, ed. S. Gitin, J.E. Wright, and J.P. Dessel (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 199–206.

43 Cf. Yair Zakovitch, "The Object of the Narrative of the Burial of Foreign Gods at Shechem," *BetM* 25 (1980): 30–37; Nadav Na'aman, "The Law of the Altar in Deuteronomy and the Cultic Site Near Shechem," in *Rethinking the Foundations: Historiography in the Ancient World and in the Bible*, FS J. Van Seters, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Thomas Römer, BZAW 294 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 141–61, 160–61 n. 54; Hans A. Rapp, *Jakob in Bet-El: Gen 35,1–15 und die jüdische Literatur des 3. und 2. Jahrhunderts*, Herders Biblische Studien 29 (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 2001), 62–63. Critical are Römer, "Ende": 542 n. 103 and note also the considerations in Uwe Becker, "Jakob in Bet-El und Sichem," in *Die Erzväter in der biblischen Tradition*, FS Matthias Köckert, ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn and Henrik Pfeiffer, BZAW 400 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 159–85, 181–82.

elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God." Why does Joshua 24 play out in Shechem?[44] Joshua's speech is addressed to "all the tribes of Israel," meaning all Israel, the North and South. Especially the invitation to the North precipitates the choice of an appropriate location. Shechem arises easily from the scenery of Deuteronomy and the book of Joshua.[45] There are, however, other reasons for specifically choosing Shechem. According to 1 Kgs 12:1, Shechem is the location where Rehoboam must go in order to be made king. Shechem , therefore, seems to have been the place where kings in Israel were enthroned. Because Joshua 24 basically reports nothing less than the choice of Yhwh as king, the founding legend of the theocracy, Shechem is the logical choice. Joshua 24 does not seem to portray Shechem as only the Northern Kingdom's primary reference point. Even though it emphasizes the North, the chapter addresses all the tribes of Israel. Additionally, the beginning of the ancestral story is a factor: according to Gen 12:6, Shechem is the first place in the land where Abraham built an altar.[46] Joshua 24 therefore constructs a narrative arc back to Genesis 12. The promulgation of the law in Shechem takes place at the same location where the first cultic place for Yhwh was set up in the land.

Joshua 24 then continues in v. 2: "And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods." The beginning of Joshua's speech assumes the idolatry of Israel's ancestors in Mesopotamia. This motif of Abraham's liberation from Mesopotamian idol worship became common in the history of reception, but it is noteworthy that it is not mentioned in Genesis 11–12. If one considers the postexilic audience of Joshua 24, then it appears that Josh 24:2 clearly views its addressees as a syncretistic religious community that worships Mesopotamian deities, though not exclusively.

Remarkably, this position is quite similar to what 2 Kgs 17:24–31 states to characterize the syncretistic religious history of the North after 722 BCE: "So these nations worshipped the Lord, but also served their carved images; to

44 The LXX, however, has: καὶ συνήγασεν Ἰησοῦς πάσας φυλὰς Ισραηλ εἰς Σηλω, therefore reading "Shiloh" instead of "Shechem" (also in v. 25). These readings might have arisen from the anti-Samaritan slant in the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX. See the discussions in Hjelm, *Jerusalem's Rise*, 197 and n. 197; Christophe Nihan, "The Torah between Samaria and Judah: Shechem and Gerizim in Deuteronomy and Joshua," in *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding its Promulgation and its Acceptance*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 187–223, 197 n. 31.

45 Cf. Blum, "Knoten."

46 Römer, "Ende," 544 n. 118.

this day their children and their children's children continue to do as their ancestors did." (2 Kgs 17:41). Of course, 2 Kgs 17:24–41 can hardly provide an adequate view into the historical religious situation in the North. However, it is still conspicuous that the authors of 2 Kings 17 could, in their time, describe the religious practices in the North in this way (cf. 2 Kgs 17:34, 41: "until this day").

A longer exposition reprising the ancestral and exodus story then follows. Joshua's speech culminates in vv. 14–15 in the call that connects with the problem presented.

> "Now therefore revere Yhwh, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve Yhwh. Now if you are unwilling to serve Yhwh, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve Yhwh."

Joshua presents the tribes of Israel with a clear choice: either Yhwh or the other deities. Eventually, the people agree in Shechem to do so. What does this entail for the meaning of Joshua 24 at the time of its authors and their contemporary readers? In light of the literary connections between Joshua 24 and other biblical texts, I proposed a dating of this text after "P" and before Nehemiah, so likely around the 5th century BCE.

For the readers of Joshua 24, Samaria and Yehud were independent provinces. Joshua 24 opts for a theocratic constitution for all Israel within the framework of a religious orientation that—in biblical terms—renounces both the deities of the ancestors from beyond the River as well as the deities of the Amorites, focusing instead on God alone. In prohibiting the tribes of Israel from serving other deities, it is hard to say exactly what Joshua 24 has in mind for readers in the 5th century BCE. There is no evidence that the Samaritans were sacrificing to multiple deities. Maybe the background of this claim is the polemic of 2Kgs 17:29–34 that is factored in here, especially 2Kgs 17:33a: "So they worshiped YHWH but also served their own gods". The choice of Shechem[47]

47 Shechem was a relatively unimportant location during the Persian period. It was unsettled from ca. 480 to ca. 330 BCE (Karl Jaroš, *Sichem: Eine archäologische und religionsgeschichtliche Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Jos 24*, OBO 11 (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1976), 47–48; cf. Römer, "Ende," 545 n. 121). The city was fortified again only in the Hellenistic period, Edward F. Campbell, "Shechem," *NEAEHL* 4:1345–54; Ahlström, *History*, 901. See however Ephraim Stern, *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian periods 732–332 B.C.*, vol. 2 of *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 427–28, who is arguing for an ongoing settlement into the 4th century. On the discussion of the tree sanctuary, see Ludwig Wächter, "Zur Lokalisierung des sichemitischen Baumheiligtums," *ZDPV* 103 (1987): 1–12.

as the location of the scene allows little doubt that in both the narrative world and the world of the narrator, the North is the specific addressee.

This reading of Joshua 24 suggests a text quite close to the basic convictions of the Chronistic History. Israel is all Israel; unlike Chronicles, however, Joshua 24 is not centered on Jerusalem. This could also be linked to the literary fiction of the scenery of Joshua 24: Jerusalem had not yet been conquered by the Israelites. During the time in which Joshua 24 is set, Shechem remained a legitimate sanctuary.

What does this mean for the history of Samaria and Yehud in the 5th century BCE? It appears that the categories for describing relations between Samaritans and Judeans in terms of competition and then separation are inadequate. For the period prior to the competition surrounding the building of the wall under Nehemiah, one should likely reckon with a phase of concordance, as Benedikt Hensel has also proposed in a recent study.[48] Joshua 24 implies a relationship between Judeans and Samaritans in which living side by side in the two provinces appears to have been understood not in terms of competition but of concordance. Joshua 24 is thus in agreement with various postexilic texts, in particular from the prophetic tradition, that nourished hopes of the restitution of all Israel following the exile: Jer 30:3, 8–9; 31:27–28, 31–34; Ezek 34:23–21; 37:15–28; Obad 18–21; Isa 11:11–16; Jer 3:18; Zech 9:9–13; 10:6–12.[49] The competitive claims of Samaria and Judah in the time of Nehemiah and finally in the combative actions of John Hyrcanus against the Samaritans completely turned this vision of restitution into an idea of the past.

48 Benedikt Hensel, *Juda und Samaria: Zum Verhältnis zweier nach-exilischer Jahwismen*, FAT 110 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016).

49 Erhard Blum, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, WMANT 57 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984), 59.